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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/779,435	02/09/2001	Tomohisa Arai	017447/0171	6673

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13
EXAMINER

SHEEHAN, JOHN P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1742

DATE MAILED: 08/11/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/779,435

Applicant(s)

ARAI ET AL.

Examiner

John P. Sheehan

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Oct. 2, 2002 & March 19, 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-22, 27-32, 34 and 36 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 23-26, 33, 35 and 37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. This application contains claims 14-22, 27-32, 34 and 36 drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse in Paper No. 7. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancellation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Priority

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1 to 13, 23 to 26, 33, 35 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over each of Pinkerton et al. (Pinkerton, US Patent No. 5,395,459) or Hirose et al. (Hirose, US Patent No. 5,425,818).

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Each of the references teaches a rare earth-transition metal-nitrogen alloy having a composition that overlaps the alloy composition recited in the instant claims and which is made by a process that overlaps the instantly claimed process (Pinkerton, column 1, line 45 to column 2, lines 10 and Hirosawa, column 1, line 55 to column 2, line 37).

The claims and the references differ in that the references are silent with respect to the presence of a nitride in the alloy, do not teach the exact same proportions and process conditions as recited in the claims nor the laves structure recited in new claim 37.

However, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have considered the invention to have been obvious because the alloy composition and the process taught by each of the references and overlaps the instantly claimed alloy and process thereby establishing a prima facie case of obviousness, *In re Malagari*, 182 USPQ 549 and MPEP 2144.05. Further, the alloys taught by the references have compositions that overlap the alloy composition recited in the instant claims and which are made by a process which is similar to if not the same as applicants' process of making the instantly claimed alloy, therefore the alloys taught by the references would be expected to possess all the same properties as recited in the instant claims, including the presence of a nitride and the laves structure recited in claim 37, *In re Best*, 195 USPQ, 430 and MPEP 2112.01.

"Where the claimed and prior art products are identical or substantially identical in structure or composition, or are produced by identical or substantially identical processes, a prima facie case of either anticipation or obviousness has been established, *In re Best*, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977). 'When the PTO shows a sound basis for believing that the products of the applicant and the prior art

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are the same, the applicant has the burden of showing that they are not.' In re Spada, 15 USPQ2d 1655, 1658 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Therefore, the prima facie case can be rebutted by evidence showing that the prior art products do not necessarily possess the characteristics of the claimed product. In re Best, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977)." see MPEP2112.01.

Further, in view of the claim language, "0 to 0.05 or less" (claim 1, the last line) the instant claims encompass the absence of a nitride.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed October 2, 2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

5. Applicants' argue that the instant claims are directed to magnetostrictive material and "A magnetostrictive material is a soft magnetic material which can be magnetized easily...and can be easily magnetized..." while the references teach hard magnetic materials. The Examiner is not persuaded. Applicants' argument appears to imply that by definition magnetostrictive materials are magnetically soft, however, applicants have not submitted any evidence to support this position. Contrary to applicants' allegation magnetostriction is defined as;

"The phenomenon of change of change of dimension with magnetization. When a ferromagnetic substance is magnetized, their occurs, in general, a change in volume as well as of shape....." (A Dictionary of Metallurgy, page 176, copy attached to this Office action).

Thus, by definition magnetostrictive materials are not limited to soft magnetic materials as applicants have argued but rather encompass both hard and soft magnetic

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materials. In view of this, applicants' claims to not preclude the magnetically hard materials taught by each of the references.

Applicants' argument that the references do not teach or suggest that the ratio of the nitride forming nitrogen to the total nitrogen should be in the range 0 to 5% by mass is not persuasive. Each of the references teaches that the nitrogen is interstitially present in the magnetic material (Hirosawa, column 1, lines 9 and 10; and Pinkerton, the Abstract and column 2, lines 1 to 4) and is silent with respect to the presence of a nitride which implies that there are no nitrides or 0% nitrides present in the materials taught by each of the references. 0% nitrides is encompassed the instant claim language 0 to 0.05 nitrides. Further, even if applicants were to argue that the material taught by each of the references must contain nitrides, in view of the fact that the instantly claimed material and the materials taught by each of the reference are made by the same process one of ordinary skill in the art would expect that the materials taught by each of the references would contain the same amount of nitride, In re Best, 195 USPQ, 430 and MPEP 2112.01.

"Where the claimed and prior art products are identical or substantially identical in structure or composition, or are produced by identical or substantially identical processes, a prima facie case of either anticipation or obviousness has been established, In re Best, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977). 'When the PTO shows a sound basis for believing that the products of the applicant and the prior art are the same, the applicant has the burden of showing that they are not.' In re Spada, 15 USPQ2d 1655, 1658 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Therefore, the prima facie case can be rebutted by evidence showing that the prior art products do not necessarily possess the characteristics of the claimed product. In re Best, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977)." see MPEP2112.01.

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Applicants' argument regarding claims 9 and 37 and the presence of a Laves phase is not persuasive. First, in claim 9 the Laves phase structure is not recited. Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). With respect to claim 37 which does recite the presence of the Laves phase, it is the Examiner's position that, the alloys taught by the references have compositions that overlap the alloy composition recited in the instant claims and which are made by a process which is similar to if not the same as applicants' process of making the instantly claimed alloy, therefore the alloys taught by the references would be expected to possess all the same properties as recited in the instant claims, including Laves phase structure recited in claim 37, *In re Best*, 195 USPQ, 430 and MPEP 2112.01.

"Where the claimed and prior art products are identical or substantially identical in structure or composition, or are produced by identical or substantially identical processes, a prima facie case of either anticipation or obviousness has been established, *In re Best*, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977). 'When the PTO shows a sound basis for believing that the products of the applicant and the prior art are the same, the applicant has the burden of showing that they are not.' *In re Spada*, 15 USPQ2d 1655, 1658 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Therefore, the prima facie case can be rebutted by evidence showing that the prior art products do not necessarily possess the characteristics of the claimed product. *In re Best*, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977)." see MPEP2112.01.

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

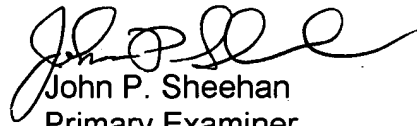
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TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P. Sheehan whose telephone number is (703) 308-3861. The examiner can normally be reached on T-F (6:30-5:00) Second Monday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on (703) 308-1146. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9310 for regular communications and (703) 872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0651.


John P. Sheehan
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1742

jps
August 8, 2003